

Masthead Logo

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# Springtime Jitterbug

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Beside her like a whisper.  
I work all the quick hooks  
Of light, the same unbroken  
Rhythm my father taught me  
Years ago: *Always give  
A man a good day's labor.*  
I won't look. The engine  
Pulls me like a dare.  
Scent of honeysuckle  
Sings black sap through mystery,  
Taboo, law, creed, what kills  
A fire that is its own heart  
Burning open the mouth.  
But I won't look  
At the insinuation of buds  
Tipped with cinnabar.  
I'm here, as if I never left,  
Stopped in this garden,  
Drawn to some Lotus-eater. Pollen  
Explodes, but I only smell  
Gasoline & oil on my hands,  
& can't say why there's this bed  
Of crushed narcissus  
As if gods wrestled here.

### SPRINGTIME JITTERBUG

A torpid eye squints open, hungry  
For spring, as lovers walk hip to hip.  
Another eye peers from a knothole,  
& underneath a crescendo of leaves

A new heart begins to plea with the soil.  
Something unseeable sings open the flawed mouth,  
Harmonizing with Ella & Satchmo as "I Won't Dance"  
Spins on the turntable. A thrush

Unravels its song like a blind stitch  
Holding night & day together. Some mantra  
Calibrates the primary colors into focus,  
Till the hills are jazzed beyond

April's blue absolution,  
Beyond doubt, like a hydrogen star falling  
To burn out a hundred years  
After we're dead.

### EUPHONY

Hands make love to thigh, breast, clavicle,  
Willed to each other, to the keyboard—  
Searching the whole forest of compromises  
Till the soft engine kicks in, running

On honey. Dissonance worked  
Into harmony, even-handed  
As Art Tatum's plea to the keys.  
Like a woman & man who have lived

A long time together, they know how  
To keep the song alive. Wordless  
Epics into the cold night, keepers  
Of the fire—the right hand lifts

Like the ghost of a sparrow  
& the left uses every motionless muscle.  
Notes divide, balancing each other,  
Love & hate tattooed on the fingers.